

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 TRSY-02 OMB-01 /057 W

-----311416Z 095046 /43

R 310945Z MAR 77

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5819

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JOHANNESBURG 0737

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, SF

SUBJECT: UP NATINAL TREASURER DISCUSSES FACTION FIGHT

REF: JOHANNESBURG 0600

1. CONOFF MET WITH UNITED PARTY NATIONAL TREASURER (AND CHAIRMAN NEDBANK) FRANS CRONJE TO DISCUSS PROBABLE OUTCOME OF STRUGGLE BETWEEN CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL FACTIONS OF UP IN THE TRANSVAAL. IN THE AFTERMATH OF JOHANNESBURG ELECTION DEBACLE THAT SAW THE UP LOSE ITS HOLD ON JOHANNESBURG CITY COUNCIL (REFTEL) CONSERVATIVE UP LEADER FRANCOIS OBERHOLZER THWARDED EFFORTS OF THE PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY (AFTER ELECTIONS THE LARGEST SINGLE PARTY IN THE COUNCIL) TO SEIZE CONTROL OF COUNCIL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE. INSTEAD, OBERHOLZER AGREED TO A COALITION WITH NATIONALIST PARTY TO SHARE CONTROL OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND EFFECTIVELY FREEZE OUT PRP. THIS DEAL OUTRAGED LIBERAL UP MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY TRANSVAAL CHAIRMAN JAPIE BASSON, AND HAS LED TO A MAJOR SPLIT IN THE ALREACY

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DISSENSION-WRACKED UNITED PARTY.

2. WITH TENSIONS BETWEEN OBERHOLZER AND BASSON COMING TO A HEAD THIS PAST WEEK, NATIONAL UP LEADERS HAVE QUIETLY SOUGHT TO PATCH UP BREACH BETWEEN FACTIONS IN HOPE OF PREVENTING ANY FURTHER DEFECTIONS TO THE RIGHT (TO THE NATS OR CONSERVATIVE UP BREAKAWAY GROUP THE INDEPENDENT UNITED

PARTY) OR TO THE LEFT (LIBERALS SUCH AS BASSON TO THE PRP), PARTICULARLY AS THE NATIONAL UP LEADERSHIP CONTINUES (ACCORDING TO CRONJE) WORK ON NEW OPPOSITION PARTY, WITH OR WITHOUT PARTICIPATION OF PRP.

3. CRONJE FURTHER INDICATED THAT THE NATIONAL UP LEADERSHIP, WHILE NOT ENAMORED WITH THE IDEA OF BEING IN BED WITH THE NATS, NONETHELESS LEANS TOWARD SUPPORT OF THE OBERHOLZER FACTION AND ITS DEAL WITH THE NP AS BEING THE HOBSON'S CHOICE IN A BAD SITUATION. CRONJE CITED THREE REASONS WHY THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WOULD SUPPORT OBERHOLZER: (A) NO SINGLE PARTY HAD AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF COUNCIL SEATS SO WITHOUT A COMPROMISE, PROVINCIAL GOVT (IN NAT HANDS) WOULD HAVE APPOINTED LEADER, MOST PROBABLY A NAT, PERHAPS PARACHUTED INTO JOHANNESBURG. CONSEQUENTLY, PRP REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE WOULD HAVE MEANT NAT ENTREE IN ANY EVENT. (B) EVEN IF PRP HAD JOINED WITH UP, NO MAJOR REFORMS WOULD HAVE BEEN ENACTED BECAUSE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT (NAT) WOULD NOT HAVE ALLOWED THEM. (C) UP-NAT COALITION WILL, IN REALITY, BE MORE EFFECTIVE IN TERMS OF GETTING MORE RESOURCES WITH WHICH TO HELP BLACKS. UP-PRP COALITION WOULD HAVE MEANT NAT GOVT REDUCING FLOW OF FUNDS TO JOHANNESBURG.

4. THE MUCH PUBLICIZED OBERHOLZER-BASSON DISPUTE WILL PROBABLY RESULT IN THE RESIGNATION OF BASSON AS TRANSVAAL PARTY CHAIRMAN, HOWEVER "ALMOST CERTAINLY BASSON WILL REMAIN IN THE UP PENDING EFFORTS TO FORM A NEW COMBINED OPPOSITION".
JOHNSON

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